Here the mountain slopes which

/14 cont./

C 311 only 70 years ago were still covered with dense tree growth are
134 now cleared to gain pasture areas for stock-raising, thus causing
P 361 extensive erosion of the normally already very thin humus cover-
132 ing and a certain sterility of the soil. The situation is different
in the villages still exclusively inhabited by Indios in northern
Tierradentro. They lie in part considerably higher (Mosoco,
P Vitoncó, Suin, and Lame about 2,500 meters). Here the nights
[244] are already perceptibly cold. Coffee no longer thrives, in its
P stead maize and potatoes. It is also the best climate for cattle-
[233] raising. The mountain slopes, due to relatively sparse settle-
P [311] ment on the part of the Paez, have not all been put to economic
● [134] use as yet; the /15/ tree growth guarantees natural water con-
servation throughout the year.

C 132 The two rainy periods of the year are from May to June and October to December. During these times, especially in the rainy period of the first half of the year, it rains in considerable amounts every day, whereas the dry periods are regularly free of precipitation.

C 317 Tierradentro's wealth underground has not yet been ex-
175 plored with modern means. In pre-Spanish times, and even
[135] after the Conquista /the Spanish conquest; see the glossary,
C 175 p. 249 /, numerous salt beds were exploited. The Spaniards
317 brought Negro slaves into Tierradentro as mine workers, whose
563 descendants make up a considerable part of the population of
464 Belalcázar. Today some of them work as gold-washers on the
316 banks of the Rio Paez. In Indian times gold was still obtained
C 316 at Tálaga, San Vicente, and Jambaló. In the southern part of
C [103] Tierradentro the silver mines were a significant economic factor
near the city of La Plata -- so-named because of its important
finds.

C 487 From colonial times up to five years ago only the routes passable for human beings and horses (caminos de herradura /bridle paths/) were available for traffic routes. The two chief connections were from Inzá over Paramo de las Guanacas to Silvia and Popayán and into the Cauca Valley, as well as from Inzá via La Plata into the Magdalena Valley.

C /128 cont./
311 those of the colonists in Tierradentro. In the territory of the
[137] latter there is almost no forest anywhere; all the slopes have been
[233] deforested and artificially, but not through excessive agricultural
C cultivation, made into pasture areas for the livestock of the
311 colonists or large landowners. This has upset the natural water
312 economy of the region. The water flowing off unchecked dur-
134 ing the rainy season washes away the humus earth and forms
C deep gullies on the slopes. The soil thus eroded is infertile.
[361] The mountain slopes dry out completely during the dry seasons,
P so that dwellings can only rarely be built in the higher locations
311 because of the lack of water. In the areas used solely by the
134 natives, in which a natural alternation of cultivated and fallow
312 land is observed, there are countless channels and small brooks
361 that make it possible to put a house near running water at almost
P every spot on the landscape.

241 Every task of the Paez that is connected with the fields,
461 be it clearing, sowing, or harvesting, is done extraordinarily
47K willingly by all participants, "because it is for food." There is
P simply no such thing as anyone unwilling to work in the fields.
134 The soil is not very fertile, since the major part of the moun-
241 tains in the region of Calderas consists of slate which often stands
[135] out bare and on the slopes is covered with a layer of humus or
P loam only 20 to 50 centimeters deep on the average. In the
241 valley the humus layer is often more than a meter deep. The
P abundant land available, however, does not make the utmost
[342] utilization imperative. And although the numerous mountain
brooks are diverted in such a way that every house has its running
water, nevertheless there is no acute inducement for irrigation or
terraced cultivation, nor does the use of them seem to be known.

Maize occupies the major part of the cultivated area, closely followed by sugar cane, the raw product for the manufacture of chicha. Both constitute the basic production of agriculture, and there is no Paez family that does not cultivate sugar cane and maize on its land. The size of the cultivated areas cleared by burning varies. The smallest fields that we saw

/296 cont./

13 and are of very good quality. The wheat and coffee from the
241 municipio of Inzá enjoy a deserved reputation in the republic for the quantity and quality of their crops.

133 The Páez River receives approximately 32 watercourses on
● 134 the left bank, and 17 on the right. It is easy to imagine the ruggedness of the terrain if we bear in mind the fact that each
[241] one of them forms an impassable ravine. It is also easy to imagine the magnitude of the erosion, assisted by factors of a cultural nature, such as the systematic battle against herbaceous vegetation by means of the system of annual fires. The violence of the wild waters denudes and even forms veritable rivers of stone, such as are seen at the place called Vicanenga in the municipio of Páez. The streams and torrents sometimes swell to extraordinary proportions. In 1949 the Topa torrent completely washed away its small tributary valley, on which stood the hamlet known by the name of Brisas, now Valencia, a flood which was repeated in April of this year.

241 Of course, the extent of the workable land does not keep
133 pace with the increase in population. The physiography of the
134 cold thermal level, on the other hand, spreads out and flattens
[161] a little, the horizon broadens, the patches of arboreal vegetation increase, and the plots multiply, like veritable chessboards in Mosoco, San José, and Vitoncó. Their soils nourish maize, wheat, potatoes, ullucos, nasturtium, and garlic. On the dividing lines between the plots there rise, like green walls, the plantings of cabuya.

161 3. Population density. The growth of the indigenous popu-
361 lation in general, and of the "white" one in particular, has
311 compelled the former to utilize lands increasingly more difficult, steep, /297/ and sterile, or to emigrate in search of uncultivated land. As early as the time of the Conquest we find notes on the spread of the Páez people to the western slopes of the Central Cordillera, forming such nuclei as Pitayó, Tacueyó, and San Francisco. Nowadays, we find Páez groups on the eastern slopes of the Western Cordillera in the department of Cauca, in the departments of Huila and Tolima, and in the Cauca Valley, as Páez

/297 cont./

161 outposts, the centers of Chinche and Potrerillos to the north of
311 the settlement of Palmira (4).
361

4. Duque Gómez, L. "Problemas Sociales de algunas parcialidades indígenas del Occidente de Colombia /Social problems of some native parcialidades of western Colombia/," p. 187.

Agriculture and horticulture

241 Agriculture and horticulture constitute the primary source
133 of subsistence for the Páez. It covers a wide hypsometric zone
[433] that goes from 1,000 meters (La Plata, Huila) to well beyond the contour line of 3,000 meters in altitude above sea level (Mosoco). Naturally, the species cultivated vary with the thermal level, and, consequently, the dietetic regimen. What do not vary are the methods of cultivation and, above all, the magical practices
241 associated with them. There are also variations in the extent
● 134 and the type of cultivable soils. Those used the most in Tierradentro are the ones included in the temperate thermal level. We have already discussed their fertility and extent. The soils of the cold thermal level are fertile and more extensive. Thick humus layers are found in Lame, Mosoco, San José, La Troja, Irlanda, Guanacas, Turminá, and Coscuro. These are, of course, truly privileged zones. Nevertheless, the soils are not rationally utilized or conserved. The land is exploited in an exhaustive manner. A clearing will not tolerate two consecutive plantings. Thus, each year new land, new clearing, new fencing, and new burning are required. After having been harvested once, the ground is abandoned, and in the course of the years it once more becomes covered with shrubs and thickets. After seven years, more or less, the land is again cleared of its underbrush, and the same cultivated species are planted once more. In Calderas, Santa Rosa, and Togoima, maize, arracacha, frijoles, cabbages, potatoes, and sometimes peas are planted. The process described earlier is typical of these parcialidades. In Mosoco and the cold parts generally, maize, potatoes, /298/ broad beans, and frijoles are planted in the same clearing, and

/298 cont./

241 in some cases, fruit trees, and after this, wheat. In San Andrés,
●134 especially in the vegas, maize, plantains, frijoles, arracacha, manioc, sugar cane, and coffee are planted. Thus, there is not proper utilization of the soil or protection of it, aside from the several years of rest. They are not familiar with fertilizers, the rotation of crops, or irrigation systems.

241 It is interesting to note that the families of San Andrés,
423 Calderas, Lame, and Mosoco generally have lands in the low places along the rivers and streams and in the high places where arboreal vegetation abounds, which they call the "montaña." In this way, they can cultivate cold and temperate zone plants (Calderas, San Andrés, Lame) or take advantage of the annual seasonal cycle in the high parts of the Cordillera (Mosoco).

244 A principal dwelling is erected on one of the fincas, while
342 on the others ranchos where the families live during the months of harvest are built. It is at the principal dwelling where the garden is made with plantains, sugar cane, onions, coriander, coca, cabbage (San Andrés, Santa Rosa, Calderas, Togoima), or with cabbage, garlic, onions, yuca de pipchao /yams/, peaches, and apples (Lame, Mosoco, Vitoncó). Peppers are cultivated in the gardens. This principal dwelling forms what in our culture is called hogar /hearth, home/. It is here that the fire is always maintained, that the ears of maize, bundles of wheat, bags of frijoles, tools, troughs, cooking utensils, and sugar mills are kept, where the chickens, guinea pigs, pigs, and turkeys live.

249 Industrial crops practically do not exist. There are no
[248] tobacco or cotton plantations. Sugar-cane plantings are not
[273] extensive among the natives. They are used solely for pro-
[778] ducing guarapo, which has almost completely replaced the maize chicha. Only the whites and a few mestizos have extensive sugar-cane fields for producing panela.

248 Figue thrives in Tierradentro. But it is in Vitoncó and Lame that there are numerous plantings of cabuya of very good quality in terms of the size and quantity of the fiber, planted on the boundaries of the properties. This wealth is not utilized as much as it should be. The natives merely make pouches and lassos for internal consumption.

The

/312 cont./

244 pluviometrical system in this region is relatively high, and the
[134] soils are saturated with moisture. As a result, this method of making the beds pursues a protective aim for the seeds and fruits. Each bed is raised by a thickness of 60 centimeters, with a distance of one meter between one and the next. The formation of the beds has two stages: the molding /moldeada/ and the raising /alzada/. The former consists of lifting the grass covering and folding it over itself, following the capricious undulations of the ground. It is left like this for several weeks, while the grass completely rots away. This is the only fertilizer. Then comes the planting and after this the raising, an operation which consists of covering the molding with the crumbled earth taken from the part where the grass cover was lifted. In this fashion, the beds have abundant soil in which the roots can grow. The planting does not require any weeding.

In the region that the people of Mosoco call "paramo,"
[243] potatoes are planted without order or rows of any sort. In Moras-Mosoco, as in San José, Lame, Tumbichukue, and Vitoncó, two rows of maize are planted at the edge of the beds and within them the potatoes, very close together and without any sort of
[243] order. Frijoles, broad beans, peas, or cabbages are also planted there. Cultivation is multiple and thus exhaustive. After this harvest, wheat is sown, and then the land is left to lie fallow for three or four years, after which the process is repeated. Naturally, these collective sowings rapidly exhaust the soils. Hence, the May and June sowings yield poorly and usually are lost.

The work is done by the members of the family. Mingas
[476] are still in force as a system of collective labor. They are usually
[464] attended by consanguineous and political familiars. Contract labor is common with Guambiano natives. Mosoco day-laborers are not encountered.

The potato harvest is selected into three classes: large, seed, and birucha. The first serves exclusively for the market, while
000 the last is for family consumption. /In the original text, the following tables for Mosoco, Lame, and San Andres, with the observations deduced from them, appear on two sheets inserted between pages 312 and 313./